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SUBJECT: ZIMBABWEAN PAPERS REACT TO UN REPORT ON  
LOOTING OF THE DRC

¶1. Editorials focus on the UN report on "Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)." Excerpts follow:

¶2. Under headline "Zimbabwe deserve truth on DRC looting" the independent daily "The Daily News" (10/26) comments:

"The honorable course of action for the Zimbabwean leaders named in the United Nations report on the plunder of the natural resources of the DRC is to step down immediately from their positions. . . . Only the truth can clear the air and until then, all of them must relinquish their posts. . . . The UN report confirms the suspicion both here and around the world that the whiff of scandal surrounding the presence of our troops in the DRC had a solid basis. It is scandalous that while the official government propaganda was that Zimbabwe was in the DRC to protect the sovereignty of a fellow African country under siege, its leaders were enriching themselves illicitly by exploiting the natural resources of that strife-torn country. . . ."

¶3. Under headline "Successful end to DRC mission" the government-controlled weekly "The Sunday Mail" (10/27) comments:

"On Wednesday the SADC Allied Forces in the DRC will lower their flags at their headquarters to mark the last step in the triumphal withdrawal from the Great Lakes region after a four-year campaign. No one can question the fact that they have achieved their mission - to preserve the independence and national sovereignty of a sister SADC country against invading forces. There is no doubt that it is Zimbabwe and its allies who have brought peace to the DRC and prevented what would certainly have been genocide. But Zimbabwe's detractors are determined that it should not get the glory for the work it has done. This explains why, on the eve of the withdrawal, Western forces led by Britain and the U.S. have engaged their lapdog media in Zimbabwe and in Europe to present Zimbabwe as a plunderer and not a peacemaker. To give the campaign credibility it has been presented in the form of a UN report which, when read closely, exposes itself as nothing but a consolidation of British and American intelligence reports. . . ."

¶4. Under headline "The politics behind the UN report on the DRC" the pro-government weekly "The Sunday Mirror" (10/27) comments:

"What is being peddled in the press as 'The UN Report' on the DRC is actually the third in a series of such reports which started in the year ¶2001. . . . The bottom line is that, this third report and final report was supposed to be an anti-Zimbabwe document. The tone is very clear, and the authors were at pains to name Zimbabwe or to give the name of a Zimbabwean wherever possible. There is no doubt that Zimbabweans were and are doing business in the DRC, and the Zimbabwe defense Forces involved have never denied it. They are involved in mining ventures with the full blessing of the government of the DRC. . . . Why the UN experts continued to label declared business as looting is perhaps. . . a matter of ideology. . . . The UN experts are certainly under the spell of the new ideology advanced by Paul Collier which states that all modern African conflicts are a result not of any

genuine political, national or regional security concerns, but the greed of a few African strongmen who want to benefit from the looting made possible by the occasion of war. If followed logically, this argument would nullify all African talk of fighting for liberation, sovereignty, democracy and other political values. All modern African struggles could then be reduced to nothing more than looting and plundering, and that indeed would be the end of modern African History as we know it."

SULLIVAN